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By William Vaughn Moody

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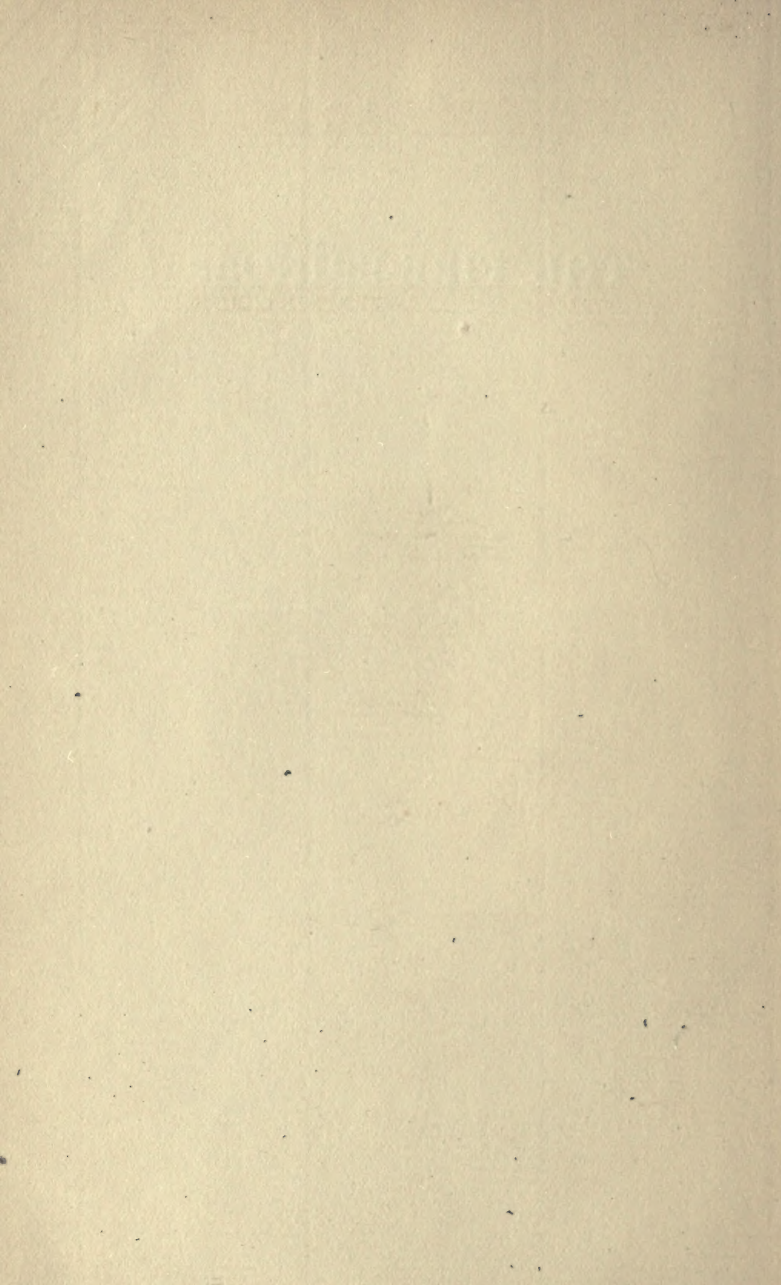
THE FIRE-BRINGER. 12mo, \$1.10 *net*. Post-  
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# THE FIRE-BRINGER



# THE FIRE-BRINGER

BY

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY



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*And when Zeus determined to destroy the men of the brazen age, Deukalion, being forewarned by Prometheus, built a boat, and putting into it food and drink, embarked with Pyrrha. Zeus sent a great rain from heaven, so that all men were overwhelmed, except a few who fled to the high places. Deukalion was driven upon the darkness of the waters until he came to Parnassus; and there, when the rains had abated, he landed and made sacrifice, praying for men to repopulate the earth. Then Deukalion and Pyrrha took stones, and threw them over their heads; those which Deukalion threw became men, and those which Pyrrha threw became women. . . . Also Prometheus gave to them fire, bringing it secretly in a fennel stalk. When Zeus learned of this, he commanded Hephæstos to bind the body of Prometheus upon Mount Caucasus; and for the theft of fire Prometheus suffered this punishment. APOLLODORUS.*





*The Fire-Bringer* is intended as the first member of a trilogy on the Promethean theme, of which *The Masque of Judgment*, already published, is the second member ; but the connection between the present poem and the one which follows it in the dramatic sequence is informal, and the action of each is complete in itself.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PROMETHEUS

PANDORA

DEUKALION

PYRRHA

ÆOLUS

LYKOPHON

ALCYONE

RHODOPE

THE STONE MEN

THE EARTH WOMEN

A PRIEST OF ZEUS

Various persons, survivors of Deukalion's flood.

# THE FIRE-BRINGER

## ACT I.

*Darkness covers the scene. Faintly discernible, a mountain slope, backed by low cliffs, and beyond these the upper stretches of the mountain. In the cliffs a small cave, and before the mouth of the cave a rude altar of earth. Deukalion and Pyrrha are seated against the cliff; Æolus lies on his face at their feet.*

*Deukalion.*

Thou hast slept long.

*Pyrrha.*

I saw a burning lamp  
That passed between the levret and the  
dove  
On Zeus's altar, and a smoke went up.



*Deukalion.*

Dreams : we are old. The green heart and  
the sear  
He feeds with dreams ; having some pur-  
pose in it,  
Or else His idleness.

*Pyrrha.*

No lamp was here ?  
No fire, no light ?

*Deukalion.*

Some fire-sparks in the eyes  
Of dull bewildered beasts that came to  
gaze,  
And dully moved again into the mist.  
They have forgot their natures, even as  
we,  
And those who tremble yonder on the  
heights  
For fear the ebbing deep should mount again,  
Breathing this darkness have forgot our-  
selves,  
Our natures, and the motions of our souls.

*Pyrrha.*

Was not the Titan here? Seemed as he  
stood,  
Behind him dawn, and in his lifted hand —

*Deukalion.*

He came, in darkness.

*Pyrrha.*

What word should he bring?

*Deukalion.*

I feigned to sleep. I had no heart for  
speech.

*Pyrrha.*

What did he, being with us?

*Deukalion.*

Stood awhile  
Watching thy slumber; touched the sleep-  
ing head  
Of Æolus; gazed upward to the heights;

Then vanished down the slope : and far below

Pandora sang.

*Pyrrha.*

Again? —

*Deukalion.*

I say below

I heard her once, and once upon the peaks.

A little after, thunder tore the sky,

And 't was as if, far off, unearthly steeds

And cloudy chariots plunged across the  
dark.

Hush fell ; and, wailing like a broken bird,

I heard her dropping down from rock to  
rock.

Then for an endless season sat she here,

Her head between her knees, and all her  
hair

Spread like a night-pool in the autumn  
woods.

(*Pause.*)

*Pyrrha.*

Since the loosed raven flew, nor came again,



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And since the black wind ceasing cast us  
here,  
How long should the time be?

### *Deukalion.*

A week, a month,  
Measureless years, some moments. Time  
is dead,  
Drowned in the waste of waters; or it  
lies  
Somewhere abolished in the primal mud,  
Caught in the rings of Python, whom at  
dusk  
Of that last day, peering in terror forth  
Before we shut the windows of our boat,  
We heard hiss from the north and from the  
south,  
And from the east and west, and saw him  
lay  
His circles round the frothy rim of the  
world;  
Or fled above the dark, Time softly there  
Laughs through the abyss of radiance with  
the gods.

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*Pyrrha.*

Think'st thou the gods laugh, now the col-  
ored world  
They sought to when the spring was on the  
hills,  
And had their stolen loves here, lies snuffed  
out,  
A reeking lamp?

*Deukalion.*

Also therefore they laugh :  
And therefore also do we bow us down  
In fear and worship.

*Pyrrha.*

Ay, so. — What sayest thou?

*Deukalion.*

I say supernal laughter and smooth days  
Fill up Heaven's golden room ! For that  
the earth  
Hath her dim sorrow and her shrouded  
face,  
Should the gods grieve?

*Pyrrha.*

Husband, these breasts are dry  
That fed our many sons ; that head of thine  
Is hoar with majesty of years and rule ;  
Much have I learned of thee and stored at  
heart

Concerning gods and men, the elder age  
Of golden peace, the silver time between,  
When lust and strife began to gnaw the  
world,

And these wild latter days. In the ark also,  
Crouching in darkness, and upon this mount  
Of weary darkness, hast thou held a torch  
To light my mind to patience of these woes  
Through understanding. Yet, behold, O  
king,

I understand not ! Wherefore hath great  
Zeus,

Thy likeness in the heavens, bound like thee  
To shepherd his wide people, sent his floods  
To whelm them up, shut from the remnant  
clans

Sun, moon, and stars ; and for a final curse  
Drawn from the flints and dry boughs of the  
pine

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The seed of divine fire, — yea, from our  
                  blood,

Yea, from the secret places of our frames  
Sucked up the fire of passion and of will,  
And left us here by the desolate black ebb  
To rot and crumble with the crumbling  
                  world?

Wherefore is this, O king?

*Deukalion.*

Thyself hast said.

*Pyrrha.*

Yet know not. — Heavy of thought ! Make  
                  me to know.

*Deukalion.*

Because these latter days are full of pride  
And lust and wrangling ; because his skies  
                  were vexed

With the might of rearing horses, and the  
                  wheels

Of chariots, and the young men blowing  
                  horns

Against his citadel; because the south  
In all its chambers laughed a grievous  
red

Out of the vineyards of its wantonness;  
Because our fitful pulses, when they fell,  
Sang grief, division, terror, shame, and loss,  
Troubling that harmony which is the breath  
Of the gods' nostrils, yea the delicate tune  
To which they pace their souls, and act with  
joy

Their several ministries.

*Pyrrha.*

Why then so long  
Do these flat slugs, that once were statured  
men,  
Cling to the oozy earth-rind He would  
cleanse

For some new perfect race? Why, when thou  
heard'st

Prometheus whisper thee his fearful news  
That evening by the farm-gate, did'st thou  
grant

No sleep to slave or free, till from the hills



The mighty pines were dragged, the hull-  
beams laid,

The roof-tree raised, the doors and windows  
set,

And through the muttering thunder all thy  
house

Led in to safety? When the holy fire,  
Brought by thine own hands from the hearth,  
went out,

Why did'st thou bare thy white head to the  
storm

To fetch another brand, and, finding none,  
Come forth with lamentation? Why were  
seen,

Through all thy mountain kingdom, runners  
stripped,

And panted words, and flying to the peaks?  
Thou answerest not; but leaning darkly  
down

Over the head of little Æolus,  
Fingerest a tarnished lock from out the dust!  
Speak, father! Through this numbing gloom,  
this death,

This veil of years, thy silence pierceth me.

*Deukalion.*

I try to feel again the thing I felt,  
But cannot, so the sinews of my soul  
Are loosened. Yet 't was for this radiant  
head

That all was done defiantly toward God.  
His father Hellen and our other sons  
Were wandering, or had poured their life-  
blood out

In obscure battle. This alone was left,  
This little flower of Greece, for whom I  
dreamed

Kingdoms and glories, plaudits, trophies,  
palms,  
And sound of deathless lyres across the  
world.

For his sake, fumbling in the gloom I built  
This altar, and have groped about the rocks  
For live thing worthy sacrifice; have lain  
In bush and hollow till some dreaming  
bird

Or sleep-besotted beast fell to my hands,  
And rent the same, and offered it with groans  
Upon the smokeless altar.

*Pyrrha.*

Once He heard,  
Thou knowest.

*Deukalion.*

I know. We will not think thereon !

*Pyrrha.*

The unwrought shapes, the unmoulded at-  
titudes !  
The tongues of earth, the stony craving eyes !

*Deukalion.*

Unto the husband was the wife's desire  
No longer, nor the husband's to the wife.  
The young maid lay undreamed on by the  
boy.

The little life that was, was sinking fast  
Or sunk beyond recall. God's doubtful voice  
Out of the wind of the oak was fair to hear,  
Seeming to promise store of goodly men,  
And women vessels for the flowing life  
To enter and be spilled not. There was hope.  
Prometheus said not nay. Beside the verge

Of the spent flood did we not see him stoop,  
Kneading the clay in with the roiled foam,  
Breathing and breathing with his fiery breath,  
Then cry upon his work, and scattering it  
Rise up in haste and wrath? Yet here was  
hope!

*Pyrrha.*

Yea, as I flung the clods, and stooped and  
flung,  
I dared not look behind, for hope; and thou,  
Stooping and flinging the allotted stones,  
Seemed clothed in prime of years, foreseeing  
earth  
With a big breed replenished; till on a sudden  
Terribly out of the gloom the Titan cried;  
Then we, ceasing, beheld, and fled in fear.

*Deukalion.*

Would they might sit as now, removed apart,  
Brooding upon the ground; nor come again  
With vague slow motion up the shrouded  
slope,  
Filling the mist with formless utterance,

As craving to be born ! My men of stone  
In dreams appal me with their lifted hands  
Of threat and supplication, and by thee  
Stand the earth-women pleading.

*Pyrrha.*

Ere I slept  
I was anhungered. Searching for sweet roots  
I crawled and groped my way, till I was come  
Unto a brackish water cupped and held  
From that same sea whereof the gurge but  
then

Lessened its roar far down the craggèd dark.  
There by the pool they sat, with faces lift  
And brows of harsh attention ; in their midst  
Pandora bowed, and sang a doubtful song,  
Its meaning faint or none, but mingled up  
Of all that nests and housekeeps in the heart,  
Or puts out in lone passion toward the vast  
And cannot choose but go.

*Deukalion.*

In mockery sent,  
In mercy be she taken, or on the hills



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Drinking this darkness, wither and be changed  
To such as we are !

*Pyrrha.*

Thinkest thou that Zeus  
In anger made her thus ?

*Deukalion.*

'T will be so. When she came  
Our minds were dim and fearful.

*Pyrrha.*

Very dim,  
And blurred with fearful dream ; but — By  
the boat

We crouched, and hearkened if the water still  
Drew downward, or was crawling up again  
To seize us unaware ; the mist was full  
Of beasts and men in wretched fellowship ;  
Then suddenly a breath like morning blew ;  
I saw as 't were a shadowy sun and moon  
Go up the blinded sky ; far off yet near  
I heard Prometheus speaking, and her voice  
In low and happy answer.

*Deukalion.*

He would catch  
The hurlèd thunder-bolt, and forge from it  
A reaper's hook ; the vials of white wrath  
He spills to make a wine-cup for a feast ;  
Curses he knows not from the gifts of love ;  
And in the shadow of this death, even here,  
As low as from her pitch of pride earth's  
fallen,

He will be plotting that whereby to climb  
And lift us high above the peaks of God  
One dizzy instant, ere we fall indeed  
And he with us forever !

*Pandora (sings, below).*

*Along the earth and up the sky  
The Fowler spreads his net :  
O soul, what pinions wild and shy  
Are on thy shoulders set ?  
What wings of longing undeterred  
Are native to thee, spirit bird ?*

*Pyrrha.*

Hearken, is't not

Her song again? Far down among the vales  
Did'st hear it? Faint and far, but —  
Hearken still!

*Pandora (sings).*

*What sky is thine behind the sky,  
For refuge and for ecstasy?  
Of all thy heavens of clear delight  
Why is each heaven twain,  
O soul! that when the lure is cast  
Before thy heedless flight,  
And thou art snared and taken fast  
Within one sky of light,  
Behold, the net is empty, the cast is vain,  
And from thy circling in the other sky the lyric  
laughters rain!*

*Deukalion.*

Through the gorge there — a shadow —  
Pyrrha, look!  
Over the torrent bed and up the slope  
Something comes on, in stature more than  
man,  
And swifter.

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*Pyrrha.*

O swift-comer, it is thou !  
None other, thou, wind-ranger, bringer-in !  
Child, be awake ! Prometheus !

*Prometheus* (entering, lifts *Pyrrha*).

Do not so ;  
These hands come poor ; these feet bring  
nothing back.

*Pyrrha.*

Thy hands come filled with thee, thy feet  
from thence  
Have brought thee hither ; it is gifts  
enough.

*Deukalion.*

Is there no hope ?

*Pyrrha.*

Speak ! speak ! Through this dark cloud  
The eyes of Zeus's eagle cannot pierce  
Or any listener heed. Have we a hope ?

*Prometheus.*

From earth and all this lower realm of air  
The fire is gone.

*Pyrrha.*

Thy searchings ! — Giveth ease  
If but to hear thy voice.

*Prometheus* (seats himself beside the cliff).

I clambered down  
Old earthquake-cloven rifts and monstrous  
chasms

Where long ago the stripling Titans peered  
At play and dared not venture, — found me  
out

Flint-stones so buried in disastrous rock  
I thought the Darkener sure had passed  
them by ;

But not a spark lived in them. Past the walls  
Rhipæan, and the Arimaspiæan caves,  
I sought the far hyperborean day,  
But not a banner of their rustling light  
Flapped through the sagging sky, nor did  
the Fates



Once fling their gleaming shuttles east or  
west.

By Indian Nysa and the Edonian fount  
Of Hæmus long I lurked, in hope to find  
Young Dionysus as he raced along  
And wrest his pine-torch from him, or to  
snare

Some god-distracted dancing ægipan,  
And from his garland crush a wine of fire  
To light the passion of the world again  
And fill man's veins with music ; but there  
went

A voice of sighing through the ghostly  
woods,

And up the mountain pastures in the mist  
Desolate creatures sorrowed for the god.  
Across the quenched Ægean, where of old  
The shining islands sang their stasimon,  
Forever chorusing great hymns of light  
Round Delos, through the driving dark I  
steered

To seek Hephæstos on his Lemnian mount ;  
But found him not. His porches were o'er-  
thrown,

His altar out, and round his faded peak  
The toiled Cyclops, bowing huge and dim,  
Uncouthly mourned. . . .

*(He starts up, and gazes toward the mountain-top.)*

Soon will the smouldering life  
Cease even to smoulder! I must forth  
again.

But where? But where?

*(Pause.)*

*Deukalion.*

Where suppliants still must go,  
But with the act of suppliance, and the  
mind.

Not stiff and rebel brows, not daring deeds  
Be of availment, but to clasp the knees  
And touch the beard of Zeus. Within his  
house

Still lives the sacred fire. 'T is there to have,  
If one by sacrifice and rites full-brought  
Could find the way.

*Prometheus (laughs).*

'T is there to have; thou sayst!  
One thistledown of fortune to the good

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And 't had been ravished thence, an hour ago,  
To better uses !

*Deukalion.*

'T was but so long since  
The thunder spake. Across the vault of  
    heaven  
Plunged down the shadowy furnishment of  
    war.

*Pyrrha.*

Thou 'rt wounded ! Lo, this arm hangs  
    helpless by ! —  
O, rash and overbold ! Thou — thou hast  
    dared —  
The hermæ holding vigil at heaven's bound  
Have cried thy name out, and the shadows  
    vast  
Of perished gods, beside the inmost hearth,  
Have spoken of thee, that the soul of Zeus  
Hath shook with dreams of evil to his  
    house !

*Deukalion.*

How might'st thou pass the terror of his  
    ward,

Tread his serenest citadel, and come  
Not thunder-blasted hither, with slight  
wound?

*Prometheus* (flings himself again upon the  
ground).

When each great cycle of Olympian years  
Rounds to its end, there comes upon the  
gods

Mysterious compulsion. As a gem  
Borne from a lighted chamber into dusk,  
Heaven of its splendor disarrays itself,  
Hushes its dyes, and all the whispering  
sphere

Hangs like a moon of change. Knowing  
not why,

Nor unto what, each brooding deity  
Wends to the sacred old Uranian field,  
Where bloom old flowers, which, in the  
morn of time,

Forgotten gods did garland for their hair,  
To celebrate some long-forgotten joy  
That then did pierce the heart of the young  
world.

Here gather they, with mute and doubtful  
looks

At one another, waiting till She comes,  
Mnemosyne, mother of thought and tears,  
Remembrancer, and bringer out of death  
Burden of longing and sweet-fruited song.  
Then toward the upper windows of the  
stars,

The roof and dome of things, the place supreme

Of speculation inward on the frame  
Of life create, and outward on the abyss  
That moans and welters in the wind of love,  
She leadeth up their shining theory,  
And there they stand and wonder on the  
time

When they were not and when they shall  
not be.

This was my moment; for I knew 't was  
near,

And laired away among the steep-up crags  
of day

That bastion and shore-fast his pearl of  
power,



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His white acropolis. Soft as light I passed  
The perilous gates that are acquainted  
forth,

The walls of starry safety and alarm,  
The pillars and the awful roofs of song,  
The stairs and colonnades whose marble  
work

Is spirit, and the joinings spirit also, —  
And from the well-brink of his central  
court

Dipped vital fire of fire, flooding my vase,  
Glutting it arm-deep in the keen element.  
Then backward swifter than the osprey dips  
Down the green slide of the sea, till — Fool,  
O fool!

'T was in my hands! 'T was next my bosom!  
Fierce

Sang the bright essence past my scorching  
cheek,

Blown up and backward as I dropped and  
skimmed

The glacier-drifts, cataracts, wild moraines,  
And walls of frightful plunge. Upon the  
shore

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Of this our night-bound wretched earth I  
    paused,  
Lifted on high the triumph of my hands,  
And flung back words and laughter. As I  
    dropped,  
The dogs of thunder chased me at the  
    heels,  
A white tongue shook against me in the  
    dark,  
And lo, my vase was rended in my hands,  
And all the precious substance that it held  
Spread, faded, and was gone,—was quenched,  
    was gone !

(*Pause.*)

*Deukalion* (in a low voice).

We cannot thank thee, though thy love be  
    love.  
Great is thy heart ; we cannot praise thy  
    deed.

*Prometheus.*

It was not therefore done !

*Pyrrha.*

For our poor praise,

For our poor love and praise ; albeit now  
The shouting of thy loud blood drowneth  
all !

*Deukalion* (after a long silence).

Prometheus, thou hast thought to be our  
friend,  
Our blood-kin, our indweller ; hast in-  
duced  
Vesture of our mortality and pain, —  
Wherefore if not for pride, for fiercest  
pride ?  
Thou hast found out wild pathways for our  
treading,  
Whispered us Nature's secrets, given to our  
hand  
The spirit of fire and all its restless works,  
Yea, blown aflame our all too eager blood  
Till earth went red and reeling like a  
torch  
When Dionysus calls under the moon.  
Look round thee, O storm-sower, what we  
reap  
Now in the season's fullness ! Is it good ?

Pride was thy lesson, and earth learned so  
well  
That she is fallen more low than she was  
high.

*Prometheus.*

And shall be higher than that height she  
was,  
By all this depth she has fallen !

*Deukalion.*

In that day

Let Chronos lift his old abolished head  
From mid Lethean mallows, and dim-  
tongued  
Call to thy shadowy brothers where they  
dream,  
And leading up his faint forgetful host,  
Rive the great diadem from Zeus's brow.  
Then may thy stormy will at last be thine ;  
But as for now, even for thy earth's dear  
sake,  
Be humble, O be humble ! Bind thy hair  
With willow, and put on the iron ring,

That so, by walking fearfully at last,  
 We bend Heaven from its anger. Else  
     shall man  
 Suffer such woes as now we muse not of,  
 And thou such punishment as quails the  
     heart  
 To think on.

*Prometheus.*

Either now with violent hand  
 We snatch salvation home, or here we sit  
 Till Python, hissing softly up the dark,  
 Dizzy our lapsèd souls, and headlong down  
 We drop into his jaws, which from the  
     first —  
 See, the boy wakes !

*Æolus (waking).*

Give me to eat and drink.

*Pyrrha.*

Water and roots I hoarded in the cave.  
 I will go fetch them forth.

*(She goes into the cave.)*



*Deukalion.*

Was 't well with thee  
In slumber, child?

*Æolus.*

I know not. I did sleep.

*Pyrrha* (coming out).

The roots are gnawed, and the sweet water  
spilled.  
Be patient, Æolus, I will seek thee more.

*Deukalion.*

Stay; let me fetch them rather. Thou wilt fall,  
Or meet some fear. The sluggish serpents lie  
And will not move, though trodden, save to  
sting.

*Pyrrha.*

Thou knowest not where the roots are still to  
find.

*Deukalion* (rising painfully).

Together then. Ah, me! Where is thy hand?

*Pyrrha.*

Here, father. No, this way!

*(They go slowly out, feeling along the cliff.)*

*Prometheus.*

Poor poisoned flower,  
Poor droop-head, down again!

*(Stoops over Æolus.)*

Woe for the house,  
Woe for the vineyard, woe for the orchard  
croft,  
The oil-tree and the place of standing corn!  
Woe for the ships of venture! Woe on Him  
Who sows and will not gather; shame and woe  
Who sendeth forth and when the message  
comes  
Makes deaf and strange!

*(He sinks down beside the cliff.)*

O Mother Clymene,  
What of the song-thrush and the morning  
star,  
The moon deep-hung with increase down the  
dawn,

The wet fields brightening fast, the hour thy  
pangs

Came on thee for my sake? What of the earth  
Thou loved'st so well and taught'st me well  
to love?

— Hears not! 'T was long ago.

*(His head falls upon his knees.)*

One deep, deep hour!

To drop ten thousand fathoms softly down  
Below the lowest heaving of life's sea,  
Till memory, sentience, will, are all annulled,  
And the wild eyes of the must-be-answered  
Sphinx,

Couchant at dusk upon the spirit's moor,  
Blocking at noon the highway of the soul,  
At morn and night a spectre in her gates, —  
For once, for one deep hour —

*(He lifts his head slowly, and peers into the darkness.)*

Say who ye are  
That fill the night with deeper heaviness!  
Break up your strangling circle and come out.  
More, more, and wretcheder! A spirit pass  
Into some old and unachievèd world,

A storm-fall in some wood of rooted souls!  
But O, what spirit-piercing flower of life  
Blooms from the wasteful heap?

*(From among the crouching figures of the Stone Men  
and Earth Women, Pandora's voice is heard.)*

*Pandora (sings).*

*Of wounds and sore defeat  
I made my battle stay;  
Wingèd sandals for my feet  
I wove of my delay;  
Of weariness and fear,  
I made my shouting spear;  
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,  
And swift oncoming doom  
I made a helmet for my head  
And a floating plume.  
From the shutting mist of death,  
From the failure of the breath,  
I made a battle-horn to blow  
Across the vales of overthrow.  
O hearken, love, the battle-horn!  
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!  
O hearken where the echoes bring,*

*Down the grey disastrous morn,  
Laughter and rallying!*

*Prometheus.*

Thou! Is it thou?

*Pandora* (comes from among the recumbent figures, holding something aloft).

Where is Prometheus?

*Prometheus.*

I am I, thou knowest.

*Pandora.*

I had a gift for him. Where is he gone?

*Prometheus.*

Give me thy gift. 'T will bring Prometheus  
back

To the high home and fortress of his soul,  
Where thou and he made gladness.

*(She gives him a fennel stalk.)*

What is this?



*Pandora.*

A hollow reed. I found it on the hills.

*Prometheus.*

Such used the mothers in the upland farms  
Fetch unpolluted fire in, once a year,  
To light their hearths anew; such would the  
girls  
Crown with fir-cone and smilax when they  
heard  
The frenzied pipe call in the midnight hills,  
And whisperings of anguish dimmed their  
blood.

*Pandora.*

Such had Prometheus, were he here again,  
Wreathed for his listening earth; such had  
he filled  
With unpolluted fire, and kindled new  
The hearth-cheer of the world.

*Prometheus.*

Earth, sea, and air,  
The caverned clouds, the chambers of the  
storm,

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Yea, the thrice perilous alps and crags of  
    heaven

Have watched the robber lurk, and laughed  
    at him !

Do not thou mock him too !

*Pandora.*

                                Him I will mock  
Who, being thirsty, climbs not to the spring,  
But meanly drinks at rillet and low pool,  
And thirsteth still the more.

*Prometheus.*

                                The spring ? The spring ?  
(*He hesitates, then starts up with a wild gesture.*)  
I could have done it once ! I could have  
    done it !

*Pandora* (coming nearer).

Stranger !

*Prometheus.*

Hush, look ! They rise at me again !

*The Stone Men.*

*When earth did heave as the sea, at the lift-  
ing up of the hills,  
One said, "Ye shall wake and be; fear not,  
ye shall have your wills."  
We waited patient and dumb; and ere we  
thought to have heard,  
One said to us "Stay!" and "Come!" — a  
dim and a mumbled word.  
Mortise us into the wall again, or lift us up  
that we look therefrom!*

*The Earth Women.*

*The night, the rain, and the dew from of old  
had lain with us,  
The suns and winds were our lovers too, and  
our husbands bounteous:  
But lo, we were sick at heart when we leaned  
from the towers of the pine,  
We yearned and thirsted apart in the crimson  
globes of the vine.  
O tell us of them that hew the tree, bring us  
to them that drink the wine!  
(They disappear.)*

*Prometheus.*

Only a moment did they strain their brows  
In weary question at me, ere they turned  
And melted down into the blotting dark !

*(He starts slowly down the slope.)*

*Pandora.*

They go to find Prometheus.

*Prometheus.*

Of these stones  
To build my rumoring city, basèd deep  
On elemental silence ; in this earth  
To plant my cool vine and my shady tree  
Whose roots shall feed upon the central fire !

*(He turns to Pandora.)*

Love !

*Pandora.*

Where thou goest, I am ; there, even now  
I stand and cry thee to me.

*Prometheus* (starts again down the slope).

Yea, I come,  
I come ; to find somewhere through the  
piled gloom

A mountain path to unimagined day,  
Build all this anger into walls of war  
Not dreamed of, dung and fatten with this  
    death  
New fields of pleasant life, and make them  
    teem  
Strange corn, miraculous wine !

*Pandora* (watching him disappear).

Prometheus, lord !

## ACT II.

*Scene as before. The space below the cliffs is deserted ; on the slope above, voices of men and women are heard.*

### *First Voice.*

Peer farther down ! Hear'st thou the waters  
yet ?

### *Second Voice.*

With sea-slime and with lichen-tangled shells  
The rocks are strewn, and ocean-breathing  
things  
Gasp in the shallow pools ; but the main  
flood  
Is sunken further than the ear can hark.

*(They descend.)*

### *A Young Man's Voice (above).*

A little strength, sister, a little strength !  
Nay then, I die with thee.



*An Old Man's Voice.*

My son, my son,  
Where art thou? Answer me!

*Another Voice.*

Peace. He is dead.  
I saw him sink upon the farther slope.  
Back to him, if thou wilt; thou 'lt come too  
late.

*Chorus of Men.*

The fallen must lie where they fell,  
For the dead cannot succor the dead.

*Chorus of Women.*

O when through the valleys of hell  
Shall the light of our Saviour be shed?

*(They descend. Others appear from above.)*

*First Voice (above).*

Trust not the sea! Look where the frothing  
lip  
Curls off the giant fang! Back to the heights!

*Second Voice.*

Nay, fallen are the waters. It is past.

*Third Voice.*

The life we hurled from off the temple crag  
With supplications and with piercing song,  
Has made thus much appeasement. One  
    more life  
Will roll away the ocean of main dark;  
Unless we be forever doomed to lie  
As now, blind bulks of sleep, or hunger-  
    bitten  
To creep the stagnant bottom of the world.

*Fourth Voice.*

This way, 't is said, Deukalion carried him.  
Follow on, yonder, where the cliff breaks  
    down.

*(They descend; others follow. From the side, below  
the cliffs, a muttering group presses in; in their  
midst are Deukalion and Pyrrha, who shield Æolus  
against the cliff. The space about the altar is filled  
with indistinct figures.)*

*Deukalion.*

I am king, hear ye, am I not the king?  
Higher than I is none. Take me! Why  
    him,

Little of strength and wisdom? I am wise,  
My cunning brain is stronger than a host.  
Though this my spear-arm be a little fallen  
From when it led you out against the north,  
I am more terrible and mighty now,  
An old, much-seeing spirit. In my death  
The gods will taste a pleasure and be  
soothed.

But from this child, this playmate — look  
ye here —

This piece of summer's carelessness, this tuft  
Of hyssop planted by the wells of glee, —  
What honor should the dread gods have on  
him?

They shall have me, Deukalion —

*A Man's Voice.*

Bring not on us  
With wordy shifts, the last steep horror  
down!

That is no babe thy withered arm hides  
there.

We know him; we have seen. If he might  
live

His name would fill the future, and make  
big

The story of his folk. He is our best,  
Our soul of price, and him the gods demand,  
Together with the maid, whose father here—  
O how much more a kinglier will than  
thou!—

*Deukalion.*

Where art thou, Lykophon? Mine eyes  
are dim.

*Lykophon.*

Here by the altar.

*Deukalion.*

And thy child?

*Lykophon.*

Here too.

*Deukalion.*

Thy heart is firm to do it? Thou wilt live,  
And think on 't after? Ay, remember that!  
Hast weighed that with the rest?

*Lykophon.*

He was my slave,  
Whose crazed old voice cried yonder of his  
son.

Was it to win a remnant of dim days,  
A handful of poor mealtimes and to-beds,  
He offered him? To watch some mornings  
rise,

Some evenings fall, fringing with fearful  
light

The cliff he hurled him from to the hungry  
sea?

Am I a lesser than my bondman is?

*Deukalion.*

Yea, ye will teach me, and I'll bear it  
tame!

I know what fits a king, what he must pay  
In peace of soul and heart's blood for his  
folk.

King-drownling of an island of drowned  
dogs,

Wolves, snakes, and field-rats, crept from  
out the flood

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For hunger and the hell-bred fog to rot !  
Rot ye ! I 'll keep my own.

*Lykophon* (to the crowd).

Back, back, I say !  
The gods despise enforced offerings.  
When the heart brings its dearest and its  
last  
Then only will they hear — if then, if  
then !

*Deukalion.*

Be this life taken, what is left ? O friends,  
O wretched children, lift your hearts and  
eyes,  
Look through the death-dark hither and be  
known  
On what you ask ; think on yourselves, on  
me,  
On them that keep the heights, and who  
lie strewn  
Along the downward path. See how the  
price  
Doth shame the purchase !



*A Man's Voice.*

We have thought on these,  
And find they are our brothers and our  
friends,  
Our parents, children, wives ; and that they  
die.

*Lykophon.*

Not they alone. The past, the future dies.

*A Woman's Voice.*

Hark what he says ! He knows not, yet he  
says !

None of you know. I have cried unto you  
And told you of it, but you will not know !  
You will not listen what I carry here  
Under my heart, and feed and shelter now,  
That then shall be the bread and wine of  
the world,

The torch and sword and lyre, the water-  
brook,

The lion-gate and wall of many towers,  
The marshaler of dances, — there, O there  
Beyond the shadow and the sorrow, far  
In God's new garden, His green virgin  
mount !

*Chorus of Women.*

Would, would we might be silent, for we  
know

Though now He puts us by,  
Though now He heeds us not nor hearken-  
eth,

The groping of our anguish up the sky  
Will wean and wear Him so  
That in the vexèd sendings of His breath  
He will breathe out a deeper than the gloom  
Of our deep doom,  
And put in death a sting sharper than death.

*(Distant thunder.)*

*Chorus of Men.*

Seize them and stifle up their irking lips !  
He grudgeth at us, but forgetteth where  
He felt our spreaded palms, and was aware  
Of fierce and tedious prayer.

Yonder of us night darkens with His frown ;  
Far off, and all forgetfully He drips  
His drowsy anger down.

*(The thunder rolls nearer, and terrific storm sweeps  
over the scene).*

*A Woman's Voice.*

Ah, no, He smiteth us ! His lightning leaps  
From end to end of the world !

*A Man's Voice.*

His thunder shakes  
The pillars of the dark. Lo, up above  
The roof of darkness ruins and lets in  
Thrice horrible night !

*Another Voice.*

Alas, the wind, the wind !  
The trampling and the bellowing herds of ,  
rain  
Loose on the mountain slopes ! Bow down !  
Bow down !

*Deukalion* (gropes forward through the tem-  
pest and lifts Æolus upon the altar).

Lord, stretch thy hand and take him ! He  
is thine.

*Lykophon.*

What criest thou, Deukalion ?

*Deukalion.*

Take the child.  
The gods' dark will be done! I am content.  
(*He falls.*)

*Lykophon* (bending over him).  
Deukalion!

*Pyrrha.*  
Husband! Father! Speak, look up!

*Lykophon* (rising).  
The king is down. Here in his mighty  
room  
I stand up over you! Where is the priest  
Who serves the altar on God's mountain  
top?

*A Man's Voice.*  
Yonder he crouches, and his sacred eyes  
Are set athwart; he wanders in his wit.

*Lykophon.*  
Prepare him for his ministry. . . . And  
thou,

Alcyone, sweet head ! Thou keepsake life  
 Left me for memory, thou precious seal  
 Stamped with her mystic love-sign unto me,  
 I put her blessing on thee ; and do thou  
 Kiss me, and put her blessing upon me  
 For this I do.

*(He lifts her upon the altar.)*

Weep not. — Room for the priest !  
*(The priest advances, holding the sacrificial knife.)*

*Pyrrha* (flings herself before the altar).  
 Hold off your hands, hold off ! The king  
           is fallen,  
 And falling spake somewhat. But I, who  
           drank  
 Of his deep will, who ever was and am  
 His heart's high furtherer, cry over him  
 Ye shall not touch them yet ! Not yet ye  
           shall !  
 Not till Prometheus comes or makes a  
           sign !

*Lykophon.*

Thou see'st the gray eternities of time

That we have waited, till our minds are  
crazed  
With watching, and our all o'er-hearkened  
ears  
Hear silence roar and mutter like a sea ;  
And still he comes not, and no word comes  
past  
The crouching places and close lairs of  
death.

*A Man's Voice.*

Yet he will come : his haughty soul shall  
not  
Be hindered of its walk.

*Priest.*

Behind the wall  
A thief was taken, and his sons at dawn  
Said " Now he comes with purchase ; we  
will feast," —  
Even while the ravens on his glazing eyes  
Were feasted, and the master of the house  
Said, " I have judged him and forgotten  
him."



Ye blind and credulous, ye whispering  
things !

Mutterers, collusioners ! What wait we  
for ?

*Chorus of Women.*

O that our spirits might not thus  
Afflict us, making pictures on the dark,  
And giving silence tongues to cry against  
us !

For though we shut our ears and will not  
hark,

And blind our eyes from seeing, he is  
there ;

The dust of heavenly battle dims his hair,  
The large gods close about him, he is down ;  
Now thrice three times about the shining  
town

The thunder-wingèd chariot drags his corse ;  
And now they bind him to the wingèd  
horse

With chains of burning light ; the portent  
rears away

O'er prairies of insufferable day !

*Chorus of Men.*

'Twixt Berenice's tangled hair  
And that blue region of the morning where  
The bright wind-shaken Lyre  
Sheds down the dawn its spilth of silver  
fire,

We saw him stoop and run upon the air,  
Shielding from region gusts the stolen  
flame ;

But from a steep cloud warping up the west  
A curse of lightning came.

With tort-flung neck and clutchèd breast  
He fell, a ruined star ;

And now the char

Had quenched itself with hissing, in the sea,  
But lo, again his soul flamed gloriously !

The eagle tempest, gyring from its place,  
Seized him, and whirled,

And hung him on the plunging prow of the  
world,

To shed the anguish of his face

Upon the reefs and shoals of space,

To lighten with the splendor of his pain  
Earth's pathway through the main,

Though death was all her freightage, and  
the breath  
That swelled her sails was death.

*A Man's Voice.*

He will not come. I heard an old bard once  
Sing of him, saying Titan Iapetos  
Fathered him not ; his mother Clymene,  
Wandering in the morning of the world,  
Suffered human embraces. 'T will be so,  
For he is human-minded, and too slight  
To wrest from God's hand the withholden  
fire.

*Second Voice.*

Hearken ! One sings upon the upper slopes.

*Third Voice.*

'T is she, the other gift in mockery sent,  
Pandora.

*Fourth Voice.*

Haunting, cruel to the heart.  
She opens sunny doors, which ere we look  
Are closed foreverlasting, and their place  
Not to be guessed.

*Fifth Voice.*

This was another thing  
Prometheus did. Whom the gods sent in  
wrath

To make us know how wondrous was the life  
That inchmeal they took from us, even her  
He chose out for his love, and even here  
He made his bridals.

*Sixth Voice.*

Some say 't is not so,  
But she Pandora is a child he had  
Before the sea rose and the night came down,  
And others say his sister, whom he fetched  
From Hades, where she was with Clymene,  
Being childed late, after the Titans fell.

*A Woman's Voice.*

Hush, hark, the pouring music ! Never yet  
The pools below the waterfalls, thy pools,  
Thy dark pools, O my heart — !

*A Young Man's Voice.*

Delirious breast !  
She jetteth gladness as a sacred bird,

That o'er the springtime waves, at large of  
dawn,  
Off Delos, to the wakening Cyclades  
Declares Apollo.

*A Girl's Voice.*

Once more, once more, O sisters, ere we die  
I will lift up my cry  
To Him who loved us though He puts us  
by.  
For yonder singer with the golden mouth  
Hath fallen upon us privily as falls  
The still spring out of the south  
On the shut passes and locked mountain  
walls,  
And suddenly from out my frozen heart  
Dark buds of sorrow start,  
Freshets of thought through my faint being  
roll,  
And dim remembrance gropes and travails  
in my soul.

I will cry on Him piercingly  
By reason of my girlhood how it ailed,  
Then when I seemed

Unto myself a thing myself had dreamed,  
And for whose sake the visionary Spring  
High in the chilly meadows where she stood  
With lips of passionate listening  
In the sea-wind above the moaning wood,  
Scattered her discrowned hair, and bowed  
herself, and wailed.

And then, a little after, came a day  
That loosed my bands of ailing all away ;  
For somewhere in the wilds a spirit spoke,  
The ghostly earth went past me like a stream,  
And swooning suddenly aloft I woke  
To an intenser dream.

Would mine were that same spirit's tongue  
to tell

The joy that then befell, —  
Rather befell not, but refrained,  
Lurked and withdrew,  
And was an inner freshness in the dew,  
A look inscrutable the stars put on,  
A fount of secret color in the dawn,  
After day-fall a daylight that remained  
Brighter than what was gone.  
O sisters, kiss the numbing death away



From off my heavy lips, and let me say  
How fair my summoned spirit blossomed in  
its clay,

When the girls sang of me that I was his  
Whose voice I heard treading the wilderness;  
And I had followed him as the homing dove  
That furtive way he went,  
Till now he had brought me up into his tent,  
Where flutes made mention of love, and wild  
throats said

With wine and honey of love were his tables  
spread,

Also the banner over us was love !  
(*Pause.*)

*A Woman's Voice.*

Look, Pandora comes !  
See, there above the cliff she glimmers down,  
And darker shapes come with her.

*A Man's Voice.*

The big seed  
Deukalion and Pyrrha sowed in hope  
To reap in terror ; the scarce-featured sons  
Of stone, and daughters of the sullen glebe.

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*Deukalion* (waking).

Pyrrha! Where art thou?

*Pyrrha.*

'T is my face thou feelest,  
Thy groping hands are even on me, father.

*Deukalion.*

Who are these? How is 't with us? O  
wherefore  
Gaze ye all thus aloft?

*Pyrrha.*

Pandora comes.

*Deukalion.*

I see naught. Since a little while mine eyes  
And brain are faded. Help mine eyes to  
see.

*Pyrrha.*

She pauses on the margin of the cliff.  
About her are the shapes of them who rose  
Behind us, when we sowed the heavy seed.  
Her either hand is on a kneeling head,

Female and male ; her forehead more than  
theirs

Is lifted up in yearning, and her face  
Is like the lyrist's when at first he waits  
And drifts his heart up through the cloudy  
strings.

*A Man's Voice.*

Take heed there to the lad, where he hath  
risen

His height upon the altar ! And the maid  
Is risen. Look to them !

*Pyrrha.*

Children ! Æolus !  
What is 't with you ? What search ye in  
the heavens ?

O, to what high thing do your spirits strain  
And your hands tremble up ?

*Æolus and Alcyone* (looking and pointing  
upward).

The stars ! The stars !

(*Pause.*)

*Deukalion.*

Why hath so deep a hush fallen on the  
night?

I heard a whispering cry. What whisper  
they?

*Pyrrha.*

Æolus pointed — whispering of the stars.

*Æolus.*

Æolus — stars. Pyrrha!

*Pyrrha.*

With thee!

*Deukalion.*

Spakest thou

Of stars?

*Pyrrha.*

Ay, so he whispered!

*Deukalion.*

Thou — and thou?

*Pyrrha.*

Nothing, nothing. My soul was as a lake

Spread out in utter darkness; to its depth  
There pierced a silvery trembling —

*Deukalion.*

Look again.  
Wife, cease to pray ! Look out again !

*Pyrrha.*

The dark  
Gathers and flees, and the wide roof of night  
Leans in as it would break ; the mountain-  
ous gloom  
Unmoors, and streameth on us like a sea.  
O Earth, lift up thy gates ! It is the stars !  
It is the stars ! It is the ancient stars !  
It is the young and everlasting stars !

*Pandora (sings).*

*Because one creature of His breath  
Sang loud into the face of death,  
Because one child of His despair  
Could strangely hope and wildly dare,  
The Spirit comes to the Bride again,  
And breathes at her door the name of the  
child ;*

*"This is the son that ye bore me! When  
Shall we kiss, and be reconciled?"*

*Furtive, dumb, in the tardy stone,  
With gropings sweet in the patient sod,  
In the roots of the pine, in the crumbled  
cone,  
With cries of haste in the willow-rod, —  
By pools where the hyla swells his throat  
And the partridge drums to his crouching mate,  
Where the moorland stag and the mountain  
goat  
Strictly seek to the ones that wait, —  
In seas aswing on the coral bar,  
In feasting depths of the evening star,  
In the dust where the mourner bows his head,  
In the blood of the living, the bones of the  
dead, —  
Wounded with love in breast and side,  
The Spirit goes in to the Bride!*

*Pyrrha.*

The veil that hid the holy sky is rent;  
The vapors ravel down; and a bright wind



Blows, that the planets and the shoalèd  
worlds

Stoop from their dance, and wheel and shout  
again,

Scattering influence as a mænad shakes  
Pine sparks and moon-dew from her whirl-  
ing hair.

And hark, below, the many-voicèd earth,  
The chanting of the old religious trees,  
Rustle of far-off waters, woven sounds  
Of small and multitudinous lives awake,  
Peopling the grasses and the pools with joy,  
Uttering their meaning to the mystic night !

*A Man's Voice.*

Within my soul there is a rushing down  
Like darkness, and my being, as a heaven,  
Soareth apparent, as a heaven with stars.  
A heaven hung with stars my spirit is,  
And all among them walks a wind of will,  
Uttering life, and purpose, and desire !

*A Woman's Voice.*

O for the dreaming herbs, the whispering  
trees,

And rustling, far-off waters of my heart !  
O for the mystic night risen within me !  
The multitudinous life, the busy sounds  
Of woven love, the hushed and pouring love,  
The pouring love and stillness of the night !

*Deukalion.*

Wife, wife, what falleth since ?

*Pyrrha.*

A stir of joy  
Troubles the fields of air 'twixt star and star.  
Across the quivering acres, by and large,  
An unimaginable Reaper goes,  
And where he walks the heavens are seldom-  
sown ;  
Till o'er wan earth the spreaded heavens are  
bare,  
Save for one mighty star that gathers light  
And stands like a flushed singer telling glory.  
Now he, now even he has no dominion,  
For he has looked behind him to the moun-  
tains,  
O, he has looked up to the lovely mountains

Of the unimagined morning, and has heark-  
ened

The pouring of the chill, eternal urns !  
Over the solemn world gray habitation  
Wonders at habitation. Room by room,  
The heavens tremble and put on delight,  
Ignorant one to another why it is  
The festal wish compels them. They are  
brightened

Under the feet of many breathless spirits,  
Who, lifting up their hands by the springs  
of ocean,

Cried " Pæan ! " and " O, Hymen ! " As a  
stream

Silvereth in a wind-start, heaven is brightened  
Under the speed and striving of those spir-  
its, —

Who now, even now dissolve, and leave be-  
hind them

Only their gladness and their speed ; for now  
Through all its height and frame of living  
light,

Through all its clear creation, breathing  
depths

And fleeing distances, the sacred sky  
Pulses and is astonished like a heart ;  
It looketh inward and bethinks itself,  
Outward, and putteth all its question by,  
To shine and soar and sing and be at one !—  
Nearhand the slopes drink light, and far  
about

Among the mountain places, headlands, cliffs,  
Lone peaks, and brotherhoods of battlement  
Shout, having apprehended. — Paler grow  
The gulfs of shadowy air that brim the vales ;  
As ocean bateth in her thousand firths,  
The gray and silver air draws down the land.  
The little trees that climb among the rocks  
As high as they can live, pierce with their  
spires

The shoaling mist, swim softly into light,  
And stand apparent, shapely, every one  
A dream of divine life, a miracle.  
Chasms are cloven in the violet  
And amethystine waters of the air ;  
Forests and winding rivers of the plain  
Are given and withdrawn ; a moment since  
I saw, I thought I saw a strength of hill

Uplifted far below us, built upon  
With what was once a lordly place of souls,  
A carved and marble place of puissant souls,  
Builded to such strong music that the sea  
Had hardly heaved one lintel from its post,  
Or marred one face of all the sculptured men,  
Or shaken from his seat one musing god.—  
Again the air is cloven ; I have seen  
Fane-crownèd promontories, curving sweeps  
Of silver shore, islands, and straits, and bays ;  
And bright beyond, the myriad ocean stream.  
And O, beyond—beyond ! — O shelter me !  
Bow down ! Cover your eyes !

*Confused Voices.*

Terrible wings !—  
Light awfuller than darkness or the sea !—  
O spirit of sharp flame amid the burning !

*A Boy's Voice.*

My hands are on my eyelids, and my knees  
Shelter my face. O mother, lay thy breast  
About me, and shut out the killing light,  
Before my eyeballs and my brain be dead !

*Deukalion* (on his knees, with out-  
stretched hands).

Of late mine eyes were quenched, and now I  
see.

*Pyrrha.*

Thine eyelids are not open, but thy face  
Searcheth into the radiance. Father, cease !  
Look not upon it with thy soul. Thy face  
Is terrible with beauty in the light.  
I cannot look upon thy seeing face.  
Take not the mortal glory on thy face !  
Bow down — O let me shield thy sightless  
eyes !

*Deukalion.*

Burning is laid unto the roots of the world ;  
The deep spouts conflagration from her  
springs ;  
And fire feeds on the air that feeds the stars.  
Out of the sea has burst, from rended deeps  
Of the unthought-on rearward has leapt out  
The appearance of the glory of the sun,  
Filling the one side of the roaring world  
With creatures and with branch-work of pale  
fire ;



And through the woods of fire the beasts of  
 fire,  
 The birds and serpents and the naked souls  
 Flee, that their fleeing startles the slow dead  
 Through all their patient kingdoms, and the  
 gods  
 In their faint spheres are flown and passion-  
 ate.

*A Man's Voice.*

My soul is among lions. God, my God,  
 Thou see'st my quivering spirit what it is !  
 O lay not life upon it ! We not knew  
 The thing we asked for. We had all forgot  
 How cruel was thy splendor in the house  
 Of sense, how awful in the house of thought,  
 How far unbearable in the wild house  
 That thou hast cast and builded for the heart !

*Lykophon.*

Deukalion, speak again !

*Pyrrha.*

If yet thy flesh  
 Endure to look upon it, speak again.

*Deukalion.*

His soul is strong and will deliver him !  
The feature of his anguish and his joy  
Makes dim the light adjacent, and his  
soul

Is bright to overcome. He treads the glory  
Over against the roaring, hitherward.

Seeing the taper of small excellent light  
He lifteth in his hand, the night rolls on  
Before him, and day follows after him.

The hours, the months, the seasons, and the  
times

Acknowledge him ; the waste calls to the  
sown ;

The islands and hoar places of the sea  
Sing, as the chief of them that are taught  
praises.

About his torch shineth a dust of souls,  
Daughters and sons, who fly into the light  
With trembling, and emerge with prophecy ;  
And round about goeth a wind of tongues,  
A wind as of the travailing of the na-  
tions ;

Vast sorrow, and the cry of desperate lives

To God, and God to them crying or answering. —

Child! Æolus! My child. Where is my child?

*Pyrrha.*

I cannot see; the dazzle of his coming  
Makes blind the place. Here, father, in thy  
knees!

Feel, 't is the darling head! Wild comer,  
when?

Hasten, have pity, we are nothing strong!  
Father, how is 't with thee? Why bow'st  
thou down?

Thy hand is cold, thy lips are very cold. —  
O gone, O gone, even at the entering-in!

*A Voice.*

Who are these coming down, that they are  
mighty

To walk with foreheads forward to the light,  
Singing the mortal radiance to its face?

*A Voice.*

It is Pandora and the unborn men,

Deukalion's seed. She doth it of her power,  
They of their weakness.

*Pandora* (sings, invisible in the light).

*Ye who from the stone and clay  
Unto godhood grope your way,  
Hastening up the morning see  
Yonder One in trinity!*

*The Earth Women.*

*Save us, flaming Three!*

*Pandora.*

*Dionysus hath the wine,  
Eros hath the rose divine,  
Lord Apollo hath the lyre :  
Three and one is the soul's desire.*

*The Stone Men.*

*Save us, sons of fire!*

*A Woman's Voice.*

Listen, they have passed.  
They go with singing forward down the  
light.

*Prometheus* (below, invisible).

Thou gavest me the vessel ; it is filled.

*Pandora.*

I am the vessel, and with thee 't is filled.

(*Pause.*)

*Lykophon* (whispers).

Pyrrha !

*Pyrrha.*

Who whispers me ?

*Lykophon.*

Is he not come ?

Is he not busied by the altar there ?

*Pyrrha.*

Nay — Lo, the terrible taper ! It is he !

I see him not ; my spirit seeth him ;

My heart acheth upon him busied there.

— Deukalion, O Deukalion !

*Prometheus* (from the altar).

Pyrrha ! Pyrrha !

*Pyrrha.*

Prometheus, saviour !

*Prometheus.*

Lykophon !

*Lykophon.*

Lo, me !

*Prometheus.*

Bring me your children hither.

*Pyrrha* and *Lykophon* (groping forward with  
Æolus and Alcyone).

Here are they !

*Prometheus.*

Unto this twain, man-child and woman-  
child,

I give the passion of this element ;

This seed of longing, substance of this  
love ;

This power, this purity, this annihilation.

Let their hands light the altar of the world.

'T is yours forever. I have brought it home !



*(The radiant mist fades ; it is clear day, flooded with morning sunlight. The children apply the burning reed to the fuel, and fire flames high upon the altar. Pandora's voice is heard faintly, far below.)*

*Pandora.*

*Too far, too far, though hidden in thine arms ;  
Too darkly far, though lips on lips are laid !  
Love, love, I am afraid ;*

*I know not where to find thee in these storms  
That dashed thy changèd breast my breast  
upon,*

*Here in the estranging dawn.*

*Unsteadfast ! who didst call and hast not  
stayed.*

*Tryst-breaker ! I have heard  
Thy voice in the green wood, and not de-  
ferred :—*

*O fold me closer, fugitive one, and say where  
thou art gone !*

*Nay, speak not, strive not, sorrow not at all !*

*O, dim and gradual !—*

*Belovèd, my belovèd, shall it be ?*

*Keep me, keep me with thy kiss,  
Save me with thy deep embrace;  
For down the gulfs of spirit space,  
The slow, the implacable winds, now unescap-  
ably*

*Wheel us downward to our bliss,  
Whelm us, darken us — O lethal winds! —  
down to our destined place.*

*Swimming faint, beneath, afar —  
O lover, let there be*

*No haste, nor clamor of thy heart to see!*

*But I have seen, and I whisper thee  
How the rivers of peace apparent are,  
And the city of bridal peace*

*Waits, and wavers, and hardly is,  
Fades, and is folded away from sight;  
And now like a lily it openeth wistfully,  
Whispering through its courts of light*

*“How long shall we be denied?*

*How long must the eastern gate stand wide,  
Ere these who are called shall enter in, and  
the bridegroom be with the bride?”*

### ACT III.

*An open rocky place higher in the mountains ; in the rock-wall at one side is a rough-hewn open tomb ; in the rear the stranded ark of Deukalion, caught amid great rocks, is outlined against snow-peaks and against a vast sunset cloud, full of shifting light. The funeral train of Deukalion winds up the steep path from below. Lykophon and a company of grown men carry the bier, beside which walk Pyrrha and Æolus.*

#### *Chorus of Old Men.*

In one same breath  
Uttering life and death,  
Whatso His mouth seems darkly to ordain  
The darkling signal of His hand makes vain,  
And like a heart confused He sayeth and  
gainsaith,

With himself He wrestles thus  
Or gives this wrestling unto us.  
Whichever, it is well.

O children, we are risen out of hell,

And it is pleasant evening ! Daughters, sing !  
 Upon his way let soft and golden mirth  
 Be spoken round the king,  
 And unto heaven be told the sweetness of  
     the earth.

*Chorus of Girls.*

How shall the thought of our hearts be  
     said,  
 Here, where this averted head  
 Lonely walks by the lonely dead ?  
 'T were better others sang,  
 Not we, not we !  
 For when the mighty morning sprang  
 Terrible in gladness from the sea,  
 When, entering the high places of the air,  
 Noontide unbelievably  
 Possessed them, and lifted up his trophy  
     there, —  
 Yea, all the noon and all the afternoon,  
 We could have put our secret by, we could  
     have spoken  
 Well before thee, O mourner, O heart-  
     broken !

But now, but now — Mother, mother,  
We have seen one coming with thee up the  
steep ;

His mild great wing we saw him keep  
Over thee like a sheltering arm,  
And the shadow of one pinion fell across  
To shield the bosom of thy lord from harm ;  
We have seen him, the dark peace-giver,  
Thanatos ; —

But O, we have seen also another,  
Winged like him, and dazzling dim,  
He came up out of the sun, yet he goeth  
not down therewith ;

For, ever warmer, closer, as the evening fall-  
eth pale,

His arm is over our necks, and his breath  
Searches whispering under our hair ; and his  
burning whisper saith

A thing that maketh the heart to cease and  
the limbs to fail,

And the hands to grope for they know not  
what ;

We would not find what he whispers of, and  
we die if we find it not !

*Chorus of Young Women.*

Ere our mothers gave us birth,  
Or in the morning of the earth  
The high gods walked with the daughters  
and found them fair,  
Ere ever the hills were piled or the seas were  
spread,  
His arm was over our necks, my sisters, his  
breath was under our hair !  
Their spirits withered and died who then  
Found not the thing that his whisper said,  
But we are the living, the chosen of life, who  
found it and found it again.  
Where, walking secret in the flame,  
Unbearably the Titan came,  
Eros, Eros, yet we knew thee,  
Yet we saw and cried unto thee !  
Where thy face amid exceeding day more  
excellently shone  
There our still hearts laughed upon thee,  
thou divine despaired-of one !  
Though o'er and o'er our eyes and ears the  
heavy hair was wound,  
Yet we saw thee, yet we heard thy pinions  
beat !



Though our fore-arms hid our faces and our  
       brows were on the ground,  
 Yet, O Eros, we declare  
 That with flutes and timbrels meet,  
 Whirling garments, drunken feet,  
 With tears and throes our souls arose and  
       danced before thee there !  
*(They place the body in the hewn vault of the rock.)*

*Pyrrha.*

Go down now. I and Æolus will watch  
 Till dawn, when ye will come to shut the  
       tomb  
 And sing him to his peace.

*Lykophon.*

Some few with thee  
 Will hold the watch, for safety.

*Pyrrha.*

None. Alone.

*(The others go down the path, leaving Pyrrha and  
 Æolus seated by the tomb ; a girl lingers behind,  
 and when the last figure has disappeared, throws  
 herself at Pyrrha's feet.)*

*Rhodope.*

See, it is Rhodope, thy handmaiden !  
Behold, thou knowest. He loved her. She  
would stay.

*Pyrrha* (touching her head).

Thy heart shall take no fear. O, stay with us !  
(*The voices of the young men are heard, descending.*)

*Chorus of Young Men.*

When, to the king's unveilèd eyes  
The rended deeps and the rended skies  
Seemed as a burning wood, —  
Iacchos ! Iacchos !  
When flame took hold of the place of the  
dead,  
And burning seized on the throne of God,  
And birds and beasts and the souls of men  
As a wind of burning fled, —  
Iacchos !  
Yea, in the blinding radiance when  
The Bringer of Light by the altar stood,  
Iacchos ! Iacchos ! Evoë !  
We saw thee, we knew thee, we cried upon  
thee !

We had lost thee and had thee again !  
 Plucker of the tragic fruit,  
 Eater of the frantic root,  
 Shaker of the cones of raving, sounder of  
                   the panic flute

Over man and brute,

Iacchos !

Hunter in the burning wood,

Planter of the mystic vine,

From the spirit and the blood

Crusher of the awful wine,

Iacchos ! Evoë ! Iacchos !

*(The voice dies away in the distance. Silence.)*

*Æolus* (whispers to Rhodope).

See'st thou ? The cloud !

*(Touching Pyrrha.)*

Mother, What means the cloud ?

*Pyrrha* (raising her head).

How, child ?

*Æolus.*

The cloud. See how it lives within !

*Pyrrha.*

'T will rain; he brought us back the blessèd  
rain,  
And storm, and natural darkness, with the  
light.

*(Bows her head again.)*

As also to our hearts the shutting-in  
Of rain and natural darkness.

*Rhodope* (looking up from *Pyrrha's* knees).

All the hours  
Since long ago at dawn, the livelong hours  
Of glory, since he brought the morning  
back,  
The cloud has piled itself, and wondrous  
lights  
Have been thus restless in it.

*Æolus.*

Where is he?

*Pyrrha.*

I know not, child. It may be that he  
sleeps,

Being weary ; or he wanders with his love  
To gaze upon the gladness of the world.

*Rhodope.*

No one has seen him since he fetched the  
light.

They say of him — I heard the old men  
say —

*Pyrrha.*

The sun goes down : we will be silent now.

*(Silence. Æolus and Rhodope, leaning together, fall  
asleep. Pyrrha kneels by the tomb, with hands  
stretched aloft upon the king's breast.)*

*Pyrrha (speaks low).*

Thou whom my glad heart once deliber-  
ately

Chose, and this morning suddenly with  
tears

Chose, and was chosen, and was made thine  
at last

In the destroying light — Deukalion, lord,  
The day is past, the evening cometh on.

Once more to thy full-wishing lips I hold

The chalice of my heart up, husband ! husband !

For night begins to pour her voices out,  
And thou art stayed for on the voiceless hills.

*(She lifts her head and listens. In the distance Pandora's voice is heard, sharp and agonized.)*

*Pyrrha.*

For thee too, then ! Even also for thee  
He smote the rock ; thy spirit thirsted too  
Afar there in the desert of thy joy,  
And came and drank against the morning  
ray

Waters of trembling. By the pools in haste  
Thy soul stooped, plucking herb and flower  
of pain

That groweth newly there, by the new  
stream !

*Rhodope* (runs with *Æolus*, and crouches beside *Pyrrha*).

Pyrrha ! Mother Pyrrha ! Look, alas,  
Lo, how it comes upon us ! The bird !  
The bird !



*Pyrrha.*

What — where? How suddenly has darkness fallen,  
And now as suddenly 't is light again!  
How terribly the lion thunder roared  
Leaping along the mountains to the sea!  
—What saw ye? What went by us in the  
wind?

*Rhodope.*

Look where the giant wings rock down the  
slope!

*Pyrrha* (gazing below).

God's bird of wrath! Swift is thy wrath,  
O God,  
Strong is thy jealousy!

*Rhodope.*

Awhile I slept;  
Then as I looked and wondered at the  
cloud,  
The restless lights flushed angry, and all  
the west  
Shone stormy bright with ridges of blown fire.

The cloud flamed like a peak of the fiery  
isles,

Where in the western seas Hephæstos toils.  
Then from yon cloven valley in the midst  
Came forth the wings and shadow of the  
bird,

And grew towards us vaster than storm, more  
swift

Than I could cry upon him, and passed down.  
Once o'er the plain and o'er the ocean  
straits,

And twice o'er the old olives by the stream  
Where the folk rest to-night, his shadow  
wheeled,

And now he towers straight upward like a  
smoke,

High, high, into the evening.

*(Pandora's cry is heard again; she appears in the  
rocks above the tomb, gazing upward. After a mo-  
ment she comes down and kneels beside Pyrrha,  
hiding her face against the rocks. Pause.)*

*Pyrrha* (in a low voice, gazing at the cloud).  
Deemest thou

That he will yield himself unmurmuring  
up,

Or will he make wild war along the peaks?

*(Prometheus enters swiftly from below, and raises Pandora. They stand clasped in each other's arms beside Pyrrha, who, still kneeling, draws herself up to gaze into the king's face, then clasps Æolus with one arm and with the other the knees of Prometheus.)*

*Pyrrha.*

Leave us not yet, before another dawn  
Comes, bringing surety ! For the giant dark,  
Seeing thee absent, may arise again,  
And Python lift unnameably his head  
In hell, hearing the gods hiss him awake.

*Prometheus.*

Be comforted ; it is established sure.  
Light shall arise from light, day follow day,  
Season meet season, with all lovely signs  
And portents of the year. These shall not  
fail ;  
From their appointed dance no star shall  
swerve,

Nor mar one accent of one whirling strophe  
Of that unfathomed chorus that they sing  
Within the porch and laughing house of  
Life,

Which Time and Space and Change, bright  
caryatids,

Do meanwhile pillar up. These shall not  
fail ;

But O, these were the least I brought you  
home !

The sun whose rising and whose going down  
Are joy and grief and wonder in the heart ;  
The moon whose tides are passion, thought,  
and will ;

The signs and portents of the spirit year, —  
For these, if you would keep them, you  
must strive

Morning and night against the jealous gods  
With anger, and with laughter, and with  
love ;

And no man hath them till he brings them  
down

With love, and rage, and laughter from the  
heavens, —

Himself the heavens, himself the scornful  
gods,

The sun, the sun-thief, and the flaming reed  
That kindles new the beauty of the world.

*(He draws Æolus and Rhodope to him.)*

For you the moon stilly imagineth  
Her loiterings and her soft vicissitudes ;  
For you the Pleiades are seven, and one  
Wanders invisible because of you ;  
For you the snake is burnished in the  
spring,

The flower has plots touching its marriage  
time,

The queen-bee from her wassailed lords  
soars high

And high and high into the nuptial blue,  
Till only one heroic lover now  
Flies with her, and her royal wish is prone  
To the elected one, whose dizzy heart  
Presageth him of ecstasy and death.

For you the sea has rivers in the midst,  
And fathomless abysses where it breeds  
Fantastic life ; and each its tiniest drop  
Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the sun

Has rivers, abysses, and fantastic life.  
For your sakes it was spoken of the soul  
That it shall be a sea whereon the moon  
Has might, and the four winds shall walk  
upon it, —

Also it has great rivers in the midst,  
Uncharted islands that no sailor sees,  
And fathomless abysses where it breeds  
Mysterious life; yea, each its tiniest drop  
Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the  
sun

Has rivers, tempests, and eternal tides,  
Untouched-at isles, horizons never hailed,  
And fathomless abysses where it breeds  
Incredible life, without astonishment.

*(He bends over Deukalion.)*

O death, majestic mood! Transfigured brow  
And eyes heavy with vision, since the time  
They saw creation sitting like a sphinx,  
Woman and lion, riddling of herself  
At twilight, in the place of parted souls —

*(He pauses, looks at the lighted cloud, and below at  
the darkening earth, where a mist is beginning to  
rise.)*



As far as being goes out past the stars  
Into unthinkable distance, and as far  
As being inward goes unthinkably,  
Traveling the atom to its fleeing core,  
Through world in world, heaven beneath  
    wheeling heaven,

Firmament under firmament, without end,—  
To-day there is rejoicing, and the folk,  
Though ignorant, call us blessed in their  
    hearts.

Yea, He who is the Life of all this life,  
Death of this death and Riser from this  
    death,

Calleth us blessed in his heart of hearts ;  
And once again, in the dim end of things,  
When the sun sickens, and the heaven of  
    heavens

Flames as a frosty leaf unto the fall,  
In swoon and anguish shall his stormèd  
    heart

Cry unto us ; his cry is ringing there  
In the sun's core ! I heard it when I stood  
Where all things past and present and to  
    come

96      THE FIRE-BRINGER

Ray out in fiery patterns, fading, changing,  
Forevermore unfaded and unchanged.

*Æolus.*

Behold, alas, mother, look up !  
O haste, let us be hidden in the rocks !

*Pyrrha.*

The wings that were a little cloud in heaven  
Shed doom over the third part of the north ;  
And now he slants enormous down the west  
Toward his throne and eyrie in the cloud.

*(In the background, about the ark of Deukalion, the  
figures of the Stone Men and Earth Women emerge,  
and stand darkly outlined against the sunset cloud.  
Prometheus speaks low to Pandora, who falls at  
his feet.)*

*Pandora.*

I would be there with thee, love. O, not  
here !

*Prometheus (stooping over her).*

There where I go thou art ; there, even  
now

Thou cried'st me to thee, and I come, I  
come.

*(He lays her in Pyrrha's arms, and disappears in  
the rocks; he emerges on a higher level behind,  
and turns westward.)*

*(Pausing beside the ark.)*

O rude and dazèd spirits ! Ye shall grope  
And wonder toward a knowledge and a grace  
That now we dream not of ; then loneliness  
Shall flee away, and enmity no more  
Be spectral in the houses and the streets  
Where walk your primal hearts in the large  
light  
That floods the after-earth.

*(He raises his arms over them.)*

Out of these stones  
I build my rumoring city, basèd deep  
On elemental silence ; in this soil  
I plant my cool vine and my shady tree,  
Whose roots shall feed upon the central  
fire !

*(He crosses a rocky stretch leading to the western  
heights over which the cloud rests, and disappears*

*in a mist-filled pass. Æolus and Rhodope creep closer to Pyrrha and Pandora, sheltering themselves from the chill of the rising mist, which slowly covers the scene. There is a long silence, broken by faint peals of thunder.)*

*Æolus (whispers).*

Mother, the mist was gray and thick to  
breathe

But now ; and now 't is thin, and flushes red  
As if all round the forests were aflame.

*Rhodope (whispers).*

Hush ! See'st thou not it is the mighty  
cloud,

That flames more fiery when the thunder  
speaks ?

*(Heavy thunder ; Pandora starts wildly up.)*

*Pyrrha (drawing her down).*

Thou spirit bird, that sangest all night long  
And mad'st sweet utterance from the secret  
shade

Where his wild heart spread coolness in the  
sun,

THE FIRE-BRINGER 99

For thee to flit and sing, — O look not  
out !

Still hide thee in my breast !

(*Pandora sinks back. Pyrrha whispers to Rhodope.*)

Rise thou, and look !

*Rhodope* (rises and speaks in a low voice).

Over against the region where he went  
Thunder has torn the curtain of the mist,  
And out of moving darkness soars the  
cloud

Like as a shadowed ruby, but above  
Like as an opal and a sardine stone  
Sun-touched to the panting heart ; and in  
the midst

Are shapes throned on the moving of the  
lights,

Who ride the wrathful lights, and are the  
lights.

Up through the driving fringes of the mist  
Battle a living splendor and a gloom.

O, while the shapes gather and wait at gaze,  
That pharos of our peril in the straits,  
That treader of the cups of gladness out

100      THE FIRE-BRINGER

In the sun's vineyard for us — Mother !  
Mother !

Look hither, look at last, for it is time.

Up through the crud and substance of the  
cloud

Prometheus wrestles with the bird of God !

*(Pyrrha rises, lifting Pandora.)*

*Æolus.*

Look how the sudden wind has quenched  
the cloud,

And them that were therein ; and how its  
blowing

Shoulders the mist away from the keen  
stars

That rushed out at the fading of the lights !

Look you, the cloud comes on us in the  
wind !

It tramples down the mountains, and above

Reaches abroad in darkness, blotting out

Place upon place of stars.

*Rhodope.*

The smoky air



Climbs up and eddies round us and falls  
down,

Rolling and spreading wider than the world !

*(As the cloud advances, Pandora goes toward it with outstretched hands, and pauses beside the prow of the ark, among the Stone Men and Earth Women, while deeper and deeper darkness drifts over the scene. The voices of Pyrrha and Pandora are heard as from the midst of the cloud.)*

*Pyrrha.*

Vast sorrow, and the voice of broken souls ;  
A cry as of all kinds and generations,  
Times, places, and tongues ; or as a mother  
Heareth her unborn child crying for birth.

*Pandora (sings).*

*A thousand æons, nailed in pain  
On the blown world's plunging prow,  
That seeks across the eternal main, —  
Down whatever storms we drift,  
What disastrous headlands lift,  
Festal lips, triumphant brow,  
Light us with thy joy, as now !*

*Pyrrha.*

A sound of calling and of answering;  
Answer or watch-cry of all desperate lives  
To God, and God to them calling or an-  
swering.

*(The Stone Men and Earth Women sing, their voices  
growing fainter as they descend the valley behind.)*

*The Stone Men and Earth Women.*

*We have heard the valleys groan  
With one voice and manifold;  
Stone is crying unto stone,  
Mould is whispering unto mould.*

*The Stone Men.*

*Hear them whisper, hear them call,  
"All for one, and one for all,  
Dig the well and raise the wall."*

*The Earth Women.*

*"For the nations to be born,  
Root away the bitter thorn,  
Reap and sow the golden corn."*

*Rhodope* (to *Pyrrha*).

Hear'st thou this yet that thou didst whisper of,

Or is all silence now even to thee?

(*Pyrrha* does not answer. *Pandora's* voice is heard, also from the valley behind, but more distant.)

*Pandora* (sings).

*I stood within the heart of God ;*

*It seemed a place that I had known :*

*(I was blood-sister to the clod,*

*Blood-brother to the stone.)*

*I found my love and labor there,*

*My house, my raiment, meat and wine,*

*My ancient rage, my old despair, —*

*Yea, all things that were mine.*

*Rhodope* (to *Æolus*).

Doth not the cloud go by us? Yonder,  
see,

A star looks dimly through. And there,  
and there

'T is all awake with stars!

*Pandora (sings).*

*I saw the spring and summer pass,  
The trees grow bare, and winter come ;  
All was the same as once it was  
Upon my hills at home.*

*Then suddenly in my own heart  
I felt God walk and gaze about ;  
He spoke ; His words seemed held apart  
With gladness and with doubt.*

*“ Here is my meat and wine,” He said,  
“ My love, my toil, my ancient care ;  
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,  
And here my old despair.*

*“ Here are my seasons : winter, spring,  
Summer the same, and autumn spills  
The fruits I look for ; everything  
As on my heavenly hills.*

*Rhodope.*

How swiftly now,

As if it had a meaning in its haste,  
The cloud-bank fades and dwindles in the  
north !

*(Starlight and silence. After a time, dawn begins to break in the east. Pyrrha rises and kneels again by the tomb. As the light increases, Æolus and Rhodope climb higher among the rocks and watch for the rising of the sun. Below, the voices of the young men are heard.)*

*Chorus of Young Men (ascending).*

One large last star, not yet persuaded well,  
Expected till the mountains should declare ;

But from his hesitant attitude,  
From his wild and waiting mood,  
Wildly, waitingly there came  
Over sea and earth and air  
And on our bended hearts there fell  
Trembling and expectation of thy name,  
Apollo !

Now the East to the West has flung  
Sudden hands aloft, and sung  
Thy titles, and thy certain coming-on ;

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Wheeling ever to the right hand, wheeling  
    ever to the dawn,  
The South has danced before the North,  
And the text of her talking feet is the news  
    of thy going forth,  
Apollo ! Apollo ! Apollo !

When radiance hid the Titan's face  
And all was blind in the altar place,  
Then we knew thee, O we cried upon thee  
    then,  
Apollo ! Apollo !  
Past thee Dionysus swept,  
The wings of Eros stirred and slept,  
And we knew not the mist of thy song from  
    the mist of the fire,  
As out of the core of the light thy lyre  
    laughed and thundered again !

Eros, how sweet  
Is the cup of thy drunkenness !  
Dionysus, how our feet  
Hasten to the burning cup  
Thou liftest up !



But O how sweetest and how most burning  
it is

To drink of the wine of thy lightsome chal-  
ices,

Apollo! Apollo! To-day

We say we will follow thee and put all  
others away.

For thou alone, O thou alone art he

Who settest the prisoned spirit free,

And sometimes ledest the rapt soul on

Where never mortal thought has gone;

Till by the ultimate stream

Of vision and of dream

She stands

With startled eyes and outstretched hands,

Looking where other suns rise over other  
lands,

And rends the lonely skies with her pro-  
phetic scream.

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